

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Frey Votes in Favor of Energy Assistance Legislation



Urges Consumers to Take Advantage of Weatherproofing Tax Breaks

HARTFORD - On Tuesday, October 25, State Rep. John H. Frey, R-Ridgefield, voted in favor of legislation that will provide eligible residents an additional \$200 to help pay escalating home heating costs this winter and other incentives for home heating efficiency. Senate Bill 2100, An Act Concerning Emergency Home Heating Assistance, now goes to Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who is expected to sign it into law.

This bill provides additional benefits under the state's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Plan (LIHEAP) program. This program helps low income households, particularly the elderly, pay the cost of their winter heating bills. The current basic benefit is \$475. This bill would provide an additional \$200, for a total of \$675.

The bill also provides new benefits under the Contingency Heating Assistance Program, an approved but unfunded component of CEAP. This change would provide a \$300 benefit for non-LIHEAP households up to 60% of the median state income, with an additional \$200 available for households utilizing deliverable fuels.

In addition, it creates a program to encourage households to receive home heating equipment tune-ups and home energy efficiency measures in FY06. It will provide a \$50 voucher for residents to use to defray the cost of tune-ups or other energy efficiency measures.

In addition to financial assistance, the legislation creates low interest loans for eligible homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. If approved by Governor Rell, beginning Nov. 25 a variety of home weatherization products such as windows, efficient thermostats, insulation, water heaters and natural gas furnaces that meet federal energy guidelines can be purchased without being charged the 6 percent state sales tax. The tax-free period would last until March 31, 2006.

"This legislation is a positive initiative to address what may end up being a very costly heating season," said Rep. Frey, who serves as an Assistant Minority Leader. "It will provide direct assistance for families who can least afford a dramatic rise in heating costs and establishes effective incentives for people to more efficiently heat their homes. I urge

anyone who is considering making these kind of home improvements to consider the savings that are available during the next few months.”